

Air Defense Artillery ensures Force Protection Operations

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“NO TRESPASSING. USE OF DEADLY FORCE AUTHORIZED.” This is the sign that leads onto the PATRIOT site that the “Spartans” of C Battery, 4th Battalion 3rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade is operating in the U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility or CENTCOM AOR. The sign is there to serve as a quick reminder to all who pass by that the time for training and hypothetical situations is no longer at hand. While PATRIOT operations are on-going, a group of dedicated Soldiers guard the gate 24 hours a day and control entry, protecting the Soldiers on the site and allowing them to focus on potential threats from the sky instead.

These Soldiers are known as the “Force Protection”. They are the front line defense that prevents any enemy threat from infiltrating the PATRIOT site. Their mission is clear and concise and consists of three tasks: defend, suppress or destroy. There is no room for error as the Force Protection Soldiers play a critical role in ensuring the Spartan Battery Air Defense Crews can perform their wartime mission of deterring and defeating 100 percent of all air breathing and tactical ballistic missile threats to their defended assets in the AOR. One of the trainers and mentors of the Force Protection Staff Sgt. Harrison said, “The overall goal of Force Protection is to keep the Soldiers safe and protected against any kind of

ground threat.” The PATRIOT site that the Spartans operate is located on the life support area or LSA in Kuwait.

The LSA serves as the gateway for getting service members to and from Afghanistan as well as getting them back home for rest and recuperation and re-deploying them upon mission completion. Air Defense Soldiers must stay current on their certifications and skill base while deployed, as well as master and apply their force protection skills. Before deploying, the Spartans focused on training more than anything else. The training was mostly in air defense-related skills but Soldiers also trained on squad battle drills and basic Soldier skills and tasks. Leading up to deployment,

the Spartans implemented Force Protection Operations into their training schedule to cover topics including but not limited to: detainee operations, personnel searches, dealing with the media, and the five S’s of Search, Silence, Speed, Segregate, and Safeguard. Staff Sgt. Kinnee commented on his Soldiers by saying, “They are very well trained at what they do. They do it every day; weekdays, weekends, holidays...every day.”